LIGHTNING MIND

Samatha Meditation – Examination and Obliteration of Intra-Mundane Consciousness in Nine Forceful Stages

by Russell K. Thorn

—777— conditioned-crisis-existence (Samsara). Also the philosophically inclined; having waded through insolvable contradictions and finally intuiting mind as the basis of everything; that person knows enlightenment is nothing other than his or her own mind in a purified condition. Its true, Samatha is a meditation employed by many individuals for a better and calmer worldliness; a tamed mind has greater potential for good qualities in every human endeavor. But for those who don't want to stay in Samsara for ever, Samatha is used to stabilize an insight into how to stop adding unwholesome causes (karma) to their mental continuums and begin creating positive ones in the process toward liberation and freedom. It should be noted that mental stabilization is a technique used in all three principal paths of Buddhism, respectfully on the teachings of the Sutras, the Tantras, and on Dzogchen. The first four books listed in the Bibliography were mainly used as guidance and reference. The instruction is drawn from both Mahayana and Theravada traditions. With the understanding that meditation stages are categorized slightly different between them, I have taken parts that were very helpful to me, especially the images and signs in the Theravadan and applied them to the Tibetan nine stages. The Theravada lists three levels of concentration: preparatory concentration, access concentration and fixed concentration. The second corresponds generally to the ninth stage of Samatha, (signaled by the counterpart sign which I have introduced here in the 6th), and the third; fixed concentration (where the counterpart sign is fully matured) corresponds partially to attaining the four pliancy's and the seven preparations of analysis required to enter the first dhyana or first 'concentration' of the Form Realm. The term concentration therefore has different positions in these systems of meditation. I have tried to put in my own words the whole sequence of nine stages using descriptions and (1) techniques that have served me over the years, however there are inescapable phrases and terms drawn from those texts which are shown in footnotes. On the basis of pith instructions, part two will formulate possible simulations that the meditator might memorize or at least help guide in his or her practice. In part three, alchemical symbolism is studied in relation to Samatha in the hope that it might interest students of Western Hermetics. Being only partially related to stabilized meditation because of its philosophical base, this symbolism (revisioned slightly), may serve as a corridor into Vipassana meditation. Preliminaries Setting Motivation: Seeing as how all spiritual traditions have a technique of calming the mind with their own specific religious motivation, and reflecting on the fact that yoga is not the exclusive property of any one of them, we will list a few of the more general advantages and virtues to be gained from secluded meditation. Among the twenty eight advantages listed in Buddhist scripture are the advantage of lengthening ones life, making one venerable, driving out discontent, removing fear, generating vigor, removing greed, hate and delusion, slaying pride, generating take time to realize is the fact that ones motivation is based on ones morality which in turn serves as the real foundation of concentration and ultimately ones wisdom. Ethics is a matter of controlling gross behavior of body and speech. By controlling that, one has some hope of meditating, i.e. controlling the subtler manifestations of our mind.The obvious reasoning in this concerns the effects of a worldly life tinged with various sense engagements and the effect unwholesome behavior has on ones ability to control and calm the mind. There is hardly a better way for the Western occultist to become morally literate than the commitment and assertion to tame his or her mind. Also, doing ceremonial magick, recitation and visualization practices without mental control one could go on for lifetimes without resulting in progress toward enlightenment. Tapped on the inside door of my friends meditation hutch was this quote by Jamgon Kongtrul: "If stubborn habits of attachment and aversion are not reversed then meditation is as meaningless as a gopher hibernating in a hole." Terms & History: Dhyana, jhana, shamatha & samadhi are names associated with meditative absorption in Sanskrit & Pali.

—777— Shamatha (zhi gnas in Tibetan) literally means "dwelling in tranquility" or "resting in peace". In the Kalachakra Tantra it is called a sport! In China we find Ch'an, and in Japan, Zen; all of them refer to concentrated attention, fixation, absorption, collections or trance. Translated in the West, the English word 'meditation' seems too (2) vague for the specific and multiple accomplishments achieved by a yogi. In the modern Theosophical movement we find the "Book of Dzyan" and the unusual combination of words: Dhyani-Chohans which literally means very pious persons (Priests) who have powers of concentration. In Celtic mythology there is found the Sidhopalescent fairy people or perhaps the mental state one must generate to see them. One of the classical and fundamental aims of yoga involves the special virtue of heat or tummo, known as kundalini, the 'serpent power'. Patanjali, ancient exponent and codifier of a preexisting yoga science formulated one hundred and ninety six yoga aphorisms. Legend says that Patanjali was an incarnation of Shesha, the kunda snake of eternity and at the end of his life was seen being swallowed by a python! Yoga itself can be said to be beginningless. In pre-Vedic India of the third millennium B.C. the Harappan culture, there is handed down an archeological motif of a man (Muni) in rigidly upright ascetic posture, legs in hieratic style. There is also told of (3) a Great Accomplishment tradition arriving from another star in another galaxy. The beginning meditator should (4) realize that yoga, as a proven method, has existed over aeons of time, and should feel this primeval precedence as support, also to be exhilarated by the opportunity to develop it into a personal internalized system. Concerning Tibetan Buddhism of which Samatha is a part, Jacob Needleman wrote in the 60s The New Religions, that it is one of the most complete and powerful spiritual systems that has ever been brought to mankind. the mind, like training in any difficult sports activity where practice brings excellence, can result in successful meditation if mental calisthenics are engaged in regularly. Following such a regime, the efficiency of a matured state of samatha acts in ways that mental state A can be transformed into mental state B in less than a few minutes on demand. This is as easy as a person at one moment being rooted to the ground, then suddenly is cycling with his or her feet off the ground, peddling and steering in a precise direction. The nine stages are considered states of mind or consciousness', one generates temporary bonds to each of them in turn as the sequence evolves. To reach the summit of the mountain that is Samatha, one must proceed from encampment to encampment; this means that one is 'collecting' clarity and stability and therefore will pass through all nine stages finally reaching the purified growth of our mind. Through accustomation we will be able to return again and again, recognizing our last encampments. The logic of the nine mental abidings must be systematically developed and their keys memorized. It is an important preliminary to have before you instructions which have been thoroughly studied and then proceed with a simulation of all nine stages at the beginning of your practice. Initially your periods of sitting meditation will consist of conceptual mental awareness but gradually it will become non-conceptual, your simulations becoming more real and gradually non-artificial as the practice continues. The instructions are our trance menu that serves as a formulary for strategically modeling our future consciousness. Three Bases: The three bases that form our structure of meditation is the physical base, the mental base, and the object of observation base. The physical base involves assuming the formal classic posture of yoga for "yoking" the mind. When the spine is straightened the inner channels are straightened, this in turn straightens the winds flowing in their course. In the beginning, winds (breathings) and mind operate together. Therefore when one sets hands together- right palm on left with thumbs together, the tip of the tongue behind upper teeth with eyes slightly closed, one is setting the stage to observe the winds which serves as a focus for your mind. The fact that we are using our own mind to start, the mental base will become the same nature of what ever is achieved, they become one entity. This is the way spiritual paths can be attained.

—777— There is no other way to meditate on a spiritual state that has not yet been achieved. The object of observation base supports the meditation. There are forty traditional Buddhist subjects used for concentration. The first category includes objects of immediate and direct perception called kasinas; these include elements, (tattvas) and colors. The second category include the reflectional or reasoning and involves various forms of mindfulness, spiritual virtue and sublime states. Also included are the reflections on the ten kinds of body decay and eight ways to be mindful of death. As Buddhism developed objects of observation became more philosophical and complex involving analytical images and non-analytical images, content, therefore the inspiration to meditate comes from the fruit of the ninth stage of final absorption and also from the momentary breathing which is the form and object of focus. As stated before there are excellent reasons for adopting the cross-legged posture with the spine erect and hands resting with palms upward, for the winds travel in channels that run the length of the body just in front of the spine. Prana (breath) and the mind are linked, it follows the mind when guided by concentration. One of my favorite analogies is the one which equates the breath with a horse which the rider (mind) mounts upon and controls all its movements with the reins of alertness. The mind travels on the winds as the rider controls the horse. We control our mind and body by assiduously developing and practicing our awareness of breath, not only in this beginning practice but ultimately when we control the inner winds of our subtle body to attain the highest accomplishments as advanced yogis. Prana gathers where the mind focusses it. Our breath is simple, easily perceived and constantly available. It is a natural process, not contrived as a visualization or reflection, both of which consist in observing a mental construct. Breath, called prana in Sanskrit and wind (lung) in Tibetan should be consciously felt in every in-breath and outbreath uninterruptedly from beginning to end. The obvious spot to focus on is the contour and tip of the nose and the upper lip, here is where one may perceive the touch sensation of the air going in and coming out of the nostrils. There will be lapses of concentration, but remember that your lungs remain faithful to their appointed task. The breath is always there, rising and falling, think of these movements as the same movements that were the intimate companions of all the Buddha's, Buddhasattvas, Gnostic Saints and Symbolist Masters of the past. One must remain motionless, alert but not tense. There should be no attempt at controlling the breath, this is not an exercise of the kind found in pranayama practices. Too strenuous breathing causes an expansion of prana beyond its usual sphere and can cause the ether-body to extend too widely. We want to stabilize the body and draw in its ether counterpart into repose. Feel that every inhalation brings a descent of clear ambrosia purifying your body, speech and mind into that of a perfect Meditation Master and every exhalation dissolving and expelling all non virtues and negative energy in the form of coarse smoky air. Another helpful image is to visualize a hollow transparent tube fitted inside with nine screens of varying sizes. The first with large openings like the kind used to separate pieces of rock from gravel. The middle ones are more like regular window screen, while the very last are exceedingly tight like a fine seive, these last ones let through only the most refined clear air, while the lower ones filter out the coarse air of gross distraction. Imagine you mind traveling up this hollow tube slowly ridding all its contents, keeping just pure, clear awareness. Lastly, if the Breath is said to be the gateway between body and mind it can also be said to be our connection with space. We can think that the out-breath especially is a kind of opening into space (inner space) that allows the centralized notion of ourselves, the "I" and "Me" still and feeling still is the first goal to be sought. Objects of sight and sound and the total atmospheric "around me" feelings are receding into the background, let your body image recede also, deprogram all the public and personal perceptions you have of yourself. For the duration of each sitting, drop the labels; woman, man, owner of house, student, rich, poor, executive, artist etc. What seems to be unreconcilled differences between your outer pose of social compliance and the inner energies you are now confronting will seem merely apparent. We must remember that every uncontrolled thought is unprofitable to our progress, and the effort to develop and maintain what is profitable makes it possible to lead directly into exclusively putting our attention on the breath. This withdrawal of attention from physical images will help close the door on a three-dimensional worldliness and create the possibility of opening an inner "minds-eye", the internal apprehender.

—777— If we can realize that we are immersed in a constant stream of thought, that we are drowning in the density of all our previous activities, interests and surface gestures which our lives consist, then we have realized something very important, this is a sign of achievement. The energy of our 'walkingaround'-everyday mind (associated with Beta-waves) which goes mostly unchecked must now be admitted. We will perceive for the first time a sub-strata of thoughts and mental associations that have been there all along. Once we have identified this discursiveness and conceptuality as major obstructions we have found the right target. In fact the more you feel surrounded by the predominance and multiplicity of your inner mental life, the more you are developing the necessary analytical consciousness to deal with the task of achieving calm abiding. To 'identify faults' therefore means to 'drop all of this', shrink it down and willfully narrow your field of attention. The swirling pandemonium of mental sensations has been referred by others as 'roof-brain chatter', our 'monkey-mind', 'mental gossip' or 'word-salad'. As we begin to meditate, this kind of interference and barrier will be so loud and vocal it won't listen to us, it continues unabated even in sleep making up the bulk of our mental life, filtering out the present moment and drowning perceptions. However the overgrowth of uncontrolled thoughts and the habitual memory baked crusts of perceptions can never be total, such a totality would become madness. In fact no thought can be total because in taming our minds we are joining it to the authentic consciousness of clarity and awareness which is completely devoid of conceptuality and contrivance of any kind; this is the natural state of our mind, its primordial nature. Seen in this light, meditation is very radical, in that it is the ultimate frontier, the last frontier, it is a deeper surgery than death itself and is the most cutting-edge experimental activity a human being can do. The movements from our surface mind which is open to the outer atmosphere will gradually decrease and begin to steer inward, crossing the threshold of the outer rim away from tangential activity. The environment inside the circle will become increasingly peaceful. The reductionist impulse is to get to the bottom of things, despite the ever-changing stream of consciousness, you remain the same person when the stream antidotes, 3. Power of thinking or reflection. Forcible engagement means to tighten the mind and force it to stay on the object of observation. One should be able to keep this forceful apprehension for a continuous interval of time, this is what is meant by 'duration setting'- squeezing your attention, compressing your focus and narrowing it to a strict confined locus. As you do this you will draw in from every side of your surroundings bits of energy that may have leaked out. Forcible engagement is acting upon the most detrimental factor at this time; a sense of inadequacy and wanting to stop and do something else, some other activity. These are the most unfavorable aspects to our practice at this time. This slackness, mental decline and laziness are directly counteracted by the antidotes of faith, aspiration and exertion. Faith in the conviction that there are good qualities that result from meditative stabilization; aspiration to attain these good qualities and finally, exertion, which means making the necessary effort to accomplish them. At this stage we must develop the strong wish to rid thoughts from our mind. Think of them as invaders and intruders. Put a restraining order out on them just as you would report such negative and troublesome persons to the police and apply for legal court action. Next, think of our uncontrolled mind with all its intrusive thoughts, ideas, sounds and images as a completely wrecked house - its a death trap with bad wiring, disastrous pluming, the roof is blowing off, all the windows and doors are broken and the floor boards are rotted. Therefore we must abandon this house immediately before something terrible happens to us. Thinking this way will help us focus on the work of ridding thoughts from the mind. Milarepa, Tibet's great yogi said: "I don't block these thoughts, but the more of them the deeper I go". We demolish all the 'formal' and 'informal' edges of inner turmoil not by outflanking them but by doing, for example as Turner, the English painter of dramatic seascapes did, by lashing himself (ourselves) to the mast of a ship, painting the violent storm from the middle of things rather than from the egocentric eye at a distance.

—777— (5) The power of reflection refers to the boundaries that are dissolving around us - the territorial boundary, the boundary of ourselves in the world and all those objects, persons and phenomena we habitually know and think of. We are reflecting how this is happening and how it is possible to make happen by our interior verbal advancement toward tranquility. Power of reflection also means that there is a higher frequency of interaction between intruding thought and thought based on meditative stratagy. Mediation takes place in the interiority that characterizes the human person. This intimate distancing of interior self and outer world is maximized in meditation, more so than sleep, more so even than death. The closure of consciousness to the outside is now becoming apparent. Its as if you are being turned back on yourself. Slowly you will grow out of your identityconsciousness and personality belief as being something or sombody fixed. Remember, "moon struck" - losing our senses, nearing mental instabiliy. Far from mental disorientation, we have advanced our ego skills to a higher level. There will be a new appreciation of how our mind can change and develop through will power and simple analysis, through a moments reflection on the 'jumping mind' a 'flag in the wind' contrasted with our moments of pure steady attention. Such reflection should give us confidence not only on the tranquillity to come, but confidence and reliance on our conventional self, the "I" which sits here working hard on a strategy to advance our spiritual mobility. This "I" is the important collector of the good karmic qualities which will follow us throughout our life and can never be reversed. Meditation is the bed rock promoting our progress toward making the world more vividly real, while enhancing the scope of ourselves and those we precieve around us. Stage Three: Resetting Key words and phrases: 1. Patching up, 2. Non-forgetting, 3. Power of Mindfulness. 4. Preliminary sign Patching up refers to patching up ones concentration after you recognize wandering off. The phrase"patch-like" refers to a sequence where this wandering and patching up takes place. Allan Bennet, one of the first Westerners to engage in this practice called losing the object of concentration and then being concerned about it: "neighbourhood concentration". The term 'mindfulness' can have a very broad meaning. What is the mode of (6) understanding mindfulness within the context of Samatha meditation? It is simply, non-forgetting, that is, not forgetting what were sitting here for. In this sense we can see memory as as form of hope. Mindfulness is the antidote to forgetfulness and therefore a technology of enhancement. At this stage, perfect recollection of the object of the breath becomes more vibrant. Mindfulness can be thought of as a sort of secondary mind which incerts remembering in the cracks of getting lost or being lost. The gradual movement from a centrifugal to a centripetal mind is beginning to show progress. But as this diagram shows, when forgetfulness takes place the process of return shows the mechanics of stage three: Resetting. Mindfulness induces a coherent alignment of attention. Through this coherence we penetrate a deeper part of ourselves, a feeling that we are going back into the cloisters of our mind. There now arises an effect similar to that of hypnosis. One could say that we are entering a heightened and prolonged state of induced suggestibility, which is the classic definition of hypnosis by Bernheim. This effect signals an important step in our progress. In fact this step is a sign, a preliminary sign of our progress made so far. Fortifying this self-induced coherence as a non-linear witness will take place in the next stage of Samatha, where it will be matured and fulfilled. Stage Four: Close Setting Key words and phrases: 1. Close placement, 2. Subject object clarity, 3. Fixation (confinment to the object), 4. Exclusively focused (aquired image, the learning sign) Close setting means we have placed our concentration closer to the object of observation in so far as it themselves to you now. The first is the subject, which is you, the meditator, your conscious perceiving mind. For the time being you can locate this in the middle of your head, in back of the eyes, perhaps somewhere central in the corpus callosum. The second is the object, the breath, which is the object of observation located in the area of the nose where inhilation and exhilation take place. This is a purposeful bifurcation into twoness that should be set in high relief.

—777— This will strengthen the sense of being a 'witness' and a 'breather' at the same time. Keep them as very distinct seperate operations. This inspection is like one mind looking at another mind, as if spying. The main mind is manifest in its observing the object of observation while the inspecting mind is somewhat non-manifest. Many of us can do two things at the same time, its done all the time, from chewing gum and walking to making change and conversing on the telephone. Another example is someone walking with a friend down a mountain path with eyes mainly avoiding various obstacles but with a corner of your 'eye' keeping a conversation going with your companion. The Fifth Dalai Lama used this last example, coining the term "a corner of the mind". This dosn't mean that someone who is very good at doing several things at once are good meditators. The point here is the aquired knack of watching your mind with your mind, thinking about your thinking. We can understand how this inner witness or 'secondary mind' can render itself sufficiently objective to study itself. This is basic to the methodology of raising and refining consciousness. Using the mind to study the mind and then explaining it, or defineing mental things by that same operaters performance; such activity is very exhilerating as well as essential to our purposes. We can also use the terms Subjective Clarity and Objective Clarity. Subjective clarity is the conscious perceiving mind in non-discursive stability. In other words its the vividness that arises from within the subject (our mind). And Objective clarity is the vigorous strength of clarity of the object of observation. In other words the vividness from the side of the object (our breath). Our mind now holds on, or 'acquires the image'. This is the 'image' of a clear steady awareness of the breathing, the place where the air strikes the surfaces of the nose and lip, etc. because the image is continuous and detailed it is called the learning sign. The acquired image is the sign that is learned, their not two different things. Paraphrased from the Visuddhi Magga: "I will develop the visual object over and over again until it comes into focus even when I open my eyes and with my eyes shut. I will develop it in this way until the learning sign arises". Its as if a passage way is revealed into the next stage of fixation, we will have learned where to find this corridor. This is what is meant by Aquired Image, there is a continuous and detailed perception of it. In the West there are some psychologists who think introspection is impossible due to the fact that individuals are unable to be objective enough judges in examining themselves; that only observing behavior of others will reliable results be achieved. Following this method, consciousness itself would be left out of the equation. The very essence of meditation begins with contemplative knowledge and selfexamination. Ultimately only your mind can know your mind, that's the unique Setting. Stage Five: Disciplining Key words and phrases: 1. Taming and Subduing. 2. Constant surveillance (vigilance), 3. Power of Introspection. There is now sensed a real state of inwardness and isolation. One can tell the difference between the mental state at the start of the sitting and the one now, but there is still much taming and subduing to be done. Our mind no longer involuntarilly draws ideas or concepts to itself, its starting to become demagnitized. Diversions are quickly dissolved and the mind is brought back to the object. Because of this dissolution one could say we have become transfigured from something crude and fixed into something more ephemeral and free. Expressed Alchemically as a weakening of Mercurius Duplex with its will-o' the-wisp treachery. This means that coarse laxity has decreased but there still occurs subtle laxity. If we get a little lift from this, it should only be allowed to promote more room, more space for us to work our stratagy upward and inward. We do not want to interpret higher planes of mind and their 'mysteries' before we can extricate ourselves from the automatic habit of lower planes. Constant surveillance means that a sentry post is set up in the center of your brain at the same proximity where the 'witness' or secondary mind was place in stage four. This special vigilant monitor turns around 360 degrees like a watch tower and beams a light over the whole or your brain pan (consciousness) detecting any intruders.

—777— Vigilance is the mental faculty of guarding and watching over the meditative process; to recognize if distractions have occured, not only in the form of spacific thoughts but in the form of laxity, excitement and scattering. Most distractions are due to a scattering of the mind. In Gurdjieff's system of "remembering" he speaks of a mental 'perch'. This is what we do; create a center inside the middle of our head and just perch there. Another analogy used is that of a spy being sent out to check for any intruding enemies. The idea of surveillance also reminds me of a description given by H.P. Blavatsky concerning building a hedge high around your inner "Holy Isle". Building a dam strong and visualizing this inner Isle as a precious deer and intrusive thoughts as hounds that pursue it. She writes: "Woe to the deer that is overtaken by the barking fiends." The power of introspection is tutored introspection, a factor of the mind that determines whether a fault is present or not. Finely tuned montoring scrutinizes the difference between coarse laxity and subtle laxity. It can make the transition from guarding against coarse laxity to the extreemly acute alertness for subtle laxity. We must admit by this stage that we are immersed in a constant stream of thought of which we merely see the surface. Just below it is a more subtle stream, more like a constant dream. Subtle laxity is considered to be one of the worst problems since it is very difficult to identify. That is, we may be fooled by a nice drifting feeling and think were meditating. Make sure that 'the taming' of the mind means avoiding becomming dull or stupid. We must stay lucid and clear, generating an alert detchment. The serious meditator should avoid wishing to join confront different kinds of faults, from the gross mental downpore of unabated chatter to the less gross and more subtle faults of mental sinking and laxity. The bulk of these distractions occur because no resistance is set against them. Whoever cultivates the nine mental collections or stages overcomes the five faults by using the eight antidotes. In the final stages the fourth fault of non-application and the fifth fault of application will be overcome by their antidotes. Now that we have accomplished the technique of observing our mind with our mind, and can divide consciousness into subject/object activities, we will build on these abilities in the next stages. By being able to experience the inner territory and environment of our mind and at the same time employing a strategy by using a system to calm it, we will develop a new technique that carries us up to the ninth stage. Using the well known anology of 'not seeing the forest for the trees', we will, by dividing our mind into applied thought and sustained thought, have the ability to see individual trees (obstacles) and navigate around them, at the same time see the whole forest (mind net) and bring its continuum into tranquility. We will combine objectivity with mindfulness as our applied thought thrusting upward with the application of strategy, while at the same time combine subjectivity with introspection as sustained thought, sustaning the vigilance of watching over and guarding the meditational process. Applied thought is focused on the chief object (the breath) and maintains that continuity of awareness. Sustained thought recognizes distraction if it occurs and keeps focused on the quality of the meditation itself. As we approach stage six the status of the verbal and (vertical thinking) of the left hemisphere has guided us sequentially upward, but now it must step back a little and realize that alone it could become a victim of its own executive rational process. The propositional step-instructions have been crucial but they cannot generate the deep structure nor make the next paradigm change alone. Now we must let our right hemisphere (lateral thinking) process our state of meditation differently letting it become more diffuse and timeless. Stage Six: Pacifying Key words and phrases: l. Calming (coherent resonance) 2. Increased energy (heightening) 3. Awareness of awareness (observe/observer, the "boot-strap effect") 4. Counterpart sign Calming means that an extreme sensitivity (resonance) begins to appear as the nuance of both stabilization and mindfulness merge. This means that the object merges with the subject in a working concert to improve clarity. How do you heighten something? Of course if one is not striving earnestly to generate a spiritual path according to religious convictions a certain heightening will be absent. In Buddhism one strives earnestly to generate a religious path, not as an object of your mind as much as the nature of mind itself.

—777— Such an object greatly increases the powers of Samatha. In this stage heightening of the mind results from the close and detailed observation of the object; it becomes known. Heightening itself becomes a known object. This means the fulfillment in the next. According to the Visuddhi Magga our progress so far has resulted in two signs. The preliminary sign and the learning sign. The next sign results from our ability to observe ourselves, it is called the counterpart sign. This is what breaks lose from the acquired image (learning sign) and brings about a subtle higher action with more refined feedback. There is a decrease in mass and an increase in organized energy which becomes independent of the biological organism that supported us up to the fifth stage. In the Path of Purification there are several figural analogies used to describe the experiences in the meditative stages. Two of them we can apply here. The first one: "Like the moon's disc coming out from behind a cloud." The second: "Like a looking-glass disc drawn from its case." We must remember that these are not necessarily a visualization to engage in as if they are material things, for then it would be considered an obstruction to our clarity; they are an analogy only. "The signs will occur unbidden." The case with the mirror inside represents our exclusive focused attention on the object of observation. Lifting the mirror out of the case, holding it up and apart from the case, represents the mental attention that now shifts to a more refined focus. The analogy represents the sudden restructuring of attention, it can actually flash in our mind, and make the leap into another mental dimension. Pulling ourselves literally up by our bootstraps is impossible. There would have to be a complete lack of gravity. But we are referring to the weightless mind where sheer thought can leap over itself into higher thought. This thought-link to a more refined space reconstitutes itself in a reciprocal maintenance. This maintenance is called the counterpart sign . It is a magical shift of focus from the object to the energy that observes it. Described by Amadeo Sole'-Leris as "The coming into awareness of the perceptual act itself - the conscious perception of perception." One feels this shift almost as a chemical or electrical process as one mind becomes neutralized (7) within a more refined mind. Awareness of the object of breath still pervades but is grasped as a subtler presence. The connection between this analogy and the mental process may not be immediately apparent until it is practiced. Several weeks might go by until the brain clicks into this higher attention-ratio, but through great surgical-like attention and skill it will happen. At that time one will realize the uncanny power of this analogy and see it as an example of the meaning-bestowing power of images. Looked at in this way, meditation concerns two primary cognitive tools: the intellect centered in mindfulness and the ineffable meaning-bestowing creativity in language that we acquired with the power of hearing in the first stages. This combination can create such experiences as the one now classified as "awareness of awareness". In the Kularnava Tantra is says "Darkness is not dispelled by mentioning the word lamp". However when dealing with minds capacity for refinement and the constant simulation with 'words' there can be a dispelling of obstructions. We spoke of the power of hearing as the dynamic guidance field. How are we giving ourselves guidance? How are we communicating with ourselves? Its obvious we have our own thoughts, and key words and phrases can be triggers of thought, they can message our psyche, each word pushing on it gently just as mantra is said to 'pound the drum concerned with the process of inner hearing, or mental noting, as a "talking to yourself" or hearing a "voice". Jeffrey Hopkins said in a lecture at Melbourne, that there is a level of thought that operates in terms of sounds (8) and names. There's another level of recognition without sounds and names, then there's another level of thought that mixes the two. Stage Seven: Thorough Pacifying Key words and phrases: 1. Refined calm 2. Applications of effort 3.Power of enthusiasm Thorough or completely pacified, means we can extend the duration of our fixation for a much longer time, avoiding the faults of forgetfulness and laxity that occurred in the earlier stages. Obscurations of excitement and scattering that caused the mind to react in one way or another have deteriorated.

—777— This is due to the continued process of intense application, described in the Visuddi Magga as "A single continuum flowing from the same stream of effort." Refined calm is the effect when mindfulness (applied thought) and introspection (sustained thought) convene, merging into a common strength. This is brought about through the force of enthusiasm and creates itself the power of enthusiasm, the pivotal ingredient that naturally comes with the counterpart sign. A quote here from Bulwer Lyton: "Nothing is so contagious as enthusiasm. It is the real allegory of the tale of Orpheus. It moves stones, it charms brutes. Enthusiasm is the genius of sincerity and truth accomplishes no victories without it." If we could describe the early stages one through five and six in terms of Newtonian physics, the seventh stage would involve the generation of a quantum state. This happens as we suddenly (and yet not so suddenly) appear in another mental dimension, as if we had zipped through a forbidden region between two psychic zones. I will brave the description and call it "the sign of the leap" realizing the Tibetan folklore concerning the unpopular frog, unpredictable because one never knows when, or in what direction it will leap. Here there is no such leap by chance but a selective move and momentum toward a single direction induced by the synchronization of applied thought and sustained thought, a climax of metacognition. This is a science term which lies at the very heart of mental control and simply means, or occurs when thought takes itself as an object, something we have been doing since stage one. Through our meditative process of resonance and entrainment we have unconsciously adjusted our own brain wave state. The electroencephalograph is a very complex and expensive instrument; the popular variations of this bio-feedback device are not needed by experienced meditators because there occurs naturally at these final stages a "clicking down" into alpha frequency idling and even lower to theta; our deepened conscious state just happens to be accompanied by them. Neither do we want to get concerned here with the current bicameral or two chamber mind research; only to say that when the two frontal lobes of the brain are synchronized the power of the brain is significantly increased. We are feeling that (9) two other applications that are understood and realized in this seventh stage. The first one concerns the cause of our accomplishments in meditation. It is from the application in this lifetime and not resulting from a past life effort or being endowed by some god or spirit that we should feel empowered. The other application is the effort we put into creating an undisturbed area for meditating; free from all distractions like noise, extremes of temperature and other environmental obstacles. Some meditators build meditation boxes instead of choosing appropriate times and rooms within ones household. These are actual small rooms built large enough to sit in comfortably, having ventilation and heat when necessary. They can be built inside, "house within a house", in basements or outside. It is essential that they completely isolate yourself from every conceivable interruption, most importantly sound and light. Stage Eight: Making One-Pointed Key words and phrases: 1. Clear comprehension 2. Collected into oneness (unification) 3. Inner confidence 4. Born of seclusion Clear comprehension means the mind is now experiencing loftiness and knows why it is. We are aware of the exalted force of our mental energy and expect to be drawn towards the absorption of one pointedness. Nearing the point of non-exertion and freed awareness, we are released from the prison of physical environment, merging deeper into an atmosphere of isolation and stillness where all random thinking has ceased. There is a feeling of having been born out of this seclusion into single pointedness. This is characterized as an uninterrupted engagement with the subject/object counterpart sign. The powers of effort in stage seven is matured and fulfilled, laxity and excitement having disappeared. It is not necessary to rely on mindfulness and introspection as separate forces, application of antidotes would be a fault, having worked in tandem up to this point they are now a single collection, unified. We are starting to feel some spiritual joy due to the gradual fading away of the various currents of passions and the distractions which accompany them. Applied thought has morphed into a feeling of joy and happiness, sustained thought into a feeling of serene bliss. Happiness means contentedness at getting the desirable object (counterpart sign) and bliss means the actual experiencing of it. In the Visuddhi Magga there is given the image of stricking a bell as the feeling of happiness, and bliss as its continued ringing. We will know this is real because these feelings will keep us on our cushion, we will not want to stop meditating. When we do finally close the session, spontanious tears and laughter will accompany our review.

—777— Entering through this middle "straight gate" gives this stage its resonant feature with a frequency and momentum that flows into a single direction generating coherent waves of neuro-electricity. Such electricity coheres into a single pointed molecule of mental focus. This molecular resonance tunes itself to a dynamic of stillness. Since the reflective functions of applied thought and sustained thought are no longer needed, what becomes present are happiness, bliss and singleness (unification of mind). Internal confidence is the consequence of these three and is felt as a smooth sustained stream of effort. At this level of control and observation. How else can we be experiencing such coherent resonance and clearity? This is answered by our noticing that our awareness and clarity reveals more and more of itself the calmer we become. Our blood in circulation and nervous system in operation may have reached low level maintenance but we haven't expired, so the body hasn't changed that much, nor have we become brain dead. Its our mind that completely has transformed itself, or perhaps has just returned to its more natural state. The analogy used concerns a naturally perfect crystal and its ability to pick up images, colors and movement in the surroundings, but when held up to the clear sky shows no reflections and is void of all imperfections. Just so our mind is capable of complete clarity. In this sense we are introduced to the subtle aspect of our mind and can experience a resting in these higher states of nonconceptuality. But these are merely the vacant qualities of our ordinary mind and should not be confused with Buddhist emptiness or the Dzogchen rigpa (primordial mind). Such philosophical propositions and "higher (11) vision" concerns a type of analytic meditation called vipasyana and is not our immediate concern yet. Samatha concerns mental stabilization which Buddhists believe is an indispensable condition for vipasyana, also for performing tantric sadhanas which require exacting visualization. Stage Nine: Equipoise Key words and phrases: 1. Even fixation, clear stillness 2. Habituated calm, power of acquaintance, total accustomation 3. Spontaneous The benefits of peacefulness and the harmfulness of emotion and all the obscuring factors it engenders stand now in great contrast. Stillness and even fixation mean that all obscuring factors have disappeared, divorced from our thought flow, an unshakable mental balance results. We have no thought flow! This mental stillness is not a mindless innocence but rather a silent contentment with no content, we are serenely stilled. Clarity occurs because we have temporally escaped the sense-bound world and all the echoes from our habit ridden compulsions. We are also free from any subconscious residue with its vestigial shadows. 'Habituated calm','power of acquaintance' and 'total accustomation' all essentially mean the same thing. They are different ways of describing the culmination of a structure, or process that calm abiding has demanded. We have achieved a power by continuously sitting hour after hour, day after day for months adapting ourselves to the regime of sitting meditation with the daily simulations, each simulation becomming less and less artificial, more and more a total realization. This has simply given us familiarity and this is what exactly we have achieved; the power of familiarity. It is only logical that when one is aiming the mind at a clear vacuity by using a system of stages with specific antidotes to remove faults, and when that state has been achieved there will be an effortlessly dwelling there. When a certain spontaneity has been achieved we apply the last antidote which is the non-application of any further antidote, logically we won't need it. The meditation stabilizes and has its own flow which forms a perpetual loop of sufficient condition. The word 'spontaneous' means effort for as long as we wish.

—777— Like a continuous input, the minds perpetual-motion is self-winding and has its local orientation stabilized in feed-forward position. Another analogy besides the mechanical one should be mentioned. The equal fire orfixed fireof the hermeticists applies even more here; with the breath, supporter of combustion and the constant circulus of the bellows in the process of refining gross metals. In fact every state in the process of samatha has its alchemical corollary. Even though alchemy has powerful symbols for one on the path of apotheosis, I feel Tibetan disciplines reveal to the Western alchemist more of his own mysteries than having that discipline add significance to Samatha or Vipassana. I also feel we have a yoga that Mme. Blavatsky would have recommend if she were still alive. She understood what was the thought-producer, that which awakes illusion. In her Voice Of (12) The Silence she said it was the mind that has endless images and pictures- the imagination and the reasoning faculty which builds on the pictures is the real creator of illusion. Therefore it is the mind which slays the real, so we must "slay the slayer." Part three of this work will pursue the subject of Alchemy on both practical and philosophical levels. Pliancies There is a difference between the ninth mind of the desire realm and pure calm abiding. The point at which the three faults of exertion, covetousness for the world and mental discomfort are removed, the ninth mind of the desire realm is attained. But calm abiding is not reached until a pliancy of the mind and a pliancy of the body is achieved. Let us review this once more. The fault of exertion means the unnecessary application of antidotes. The fault of covetousness for the world refers to attachment to your body resources in the sense world. The fault of mental discomfort means any conceptuality still in the mind. We are now sitting with a collectedness that is able to flow for a long duration, in fact because the major obstacles to our concentration is removed one could remain for a full day. This collection involves spontaneity, stability and clarity which we have accoustomated and, that now must be conjoined with the pliancies (suppleness) in order to bring about calm abiding. Mental pliancy After a stretch of time a non-obvious and difficult to analyze pliancy will be detected in your mind, first weak than becoming stronger. This is the forerunner of the mental pliancy. Like an 'omen' arising, the body will feel light and the head slightly heavier like a warm hand is being placed there. After all our exertion in meditative stabilization we have generated a mental consciousness that is out of the ordinary and truly taking to our mind, one will no longer be in any doubt as to what it is. It is a factor of composition called a 'special compositional factor'. Our (13) ninth stage is now conjoined with a special pliancy that removes any unserviceable states that might still exist. For example feelings of elation and pleasure that are let to expand into pride before true final calm abiding is As the object of observation is unimpeadeadly engaged in, a special kind of breath begins to move through our entire body. We will feel a special non-ordinary light tangible object which becomes undifferentiable from our body. This is an extension of the breathing that started our meditation in the beginning stage. It is now a subtle and more refined and extended process of breath. We seem touched by it in no ordinary way. It completely lifts any physical tiredness we might still have. We find it hard to place just where this wind is located. It does not seem that the wind is moving inside the body or that the body is outside the wind. It feels as though they are completely mixed. Bliss of Physical Pliancy The wind pervading the body arises and serves as a cause of the body consciousness that experiences bliss. This wind pervades our entire body from the soles of our feet to the crown of the head; a special bliss of body consciousness is felt throughout all the senses. The action of gravitational earth on matter seems depolarized and you sense an etheric like phenomena of upward spiritual mobility. Muscle tention is nonexistent, all factors of bodily heaviness are removed and you have become a milieu void of friction. One can understand and experience what the Theosophists meant when they said, that "matter is a strain in the aether", we are now more etheric than physical, the body feeling like a fluffy ball of cotton. In the Visuddhi Magga there is an image of a bird spreading its wings as it begins to fly into the air. We feel happiness and bliss as the the bird begins soaring in the wind with outspread wings. One could enlarge this image with a sense of height and expanse, and visualize the bird perched on a high cliff overlooking a vast sea-scape with waves rolling onto a sandy beach far below; it pushes off into the sky planing on the wind, soaring freely in space.

—777— (14) Bliss of Mental Pliancy Induced by the force of the earlier pliancy's of mind and body an intense mental bliss becomes apprehendable and now accompanies your consciousness. Remember that bliss is not pleasure. Pleasure comes to you through the senses. The bliss and joy of calm abiding comes to you through being nonsensious. There are five kinds of joy or rapture listed in some meditational texts starting with a slight rapture, like a shiver where your hairs (15) stand on end. This increases with momentary lightning-like rapture. Then a rapture repeatedly flows in and out like a showering of happiness, this is followed by an extreme lightness as if floating on air. Finally an allpervading rapture that fills your body like a mountain cavern suddenly being filled with a mighty flood of water. The body senses are forgotten and dissolve into the background. The world has flowed away from you like restless dreams. Calm spaciousness remains as you pass into elevated mind shorn of craving of every kind. The deepened atmosphere of stillness expands like a vast body of water without a ripple on its surface. The higher absorption's have filled the absences of succeeding stages, therefore we have absences following upon absence Signs of Calm Abiding The most important sign is the increase in our mental stabilization due to the fact that the pliancies have reached their capacity and have been fulfilled. They serve as special aids and assist each other. Coarse appearances to our sense consciousness have ceased, we are able to stop the manifest coarse afflictive emotions. The reasons for this is that two consciousness' cannot operate in one individual continuum at the same time. Coarse afflictive emotions and meditative stabilization are both consciousness', only one will survive. Another sign of calm abiding is the ability to turn sleep into meditative stabilization or to awaken sleep into meditative stabilization. Calm abiding will be so familiar that when you withdraw your mind into sleep, your sleep will become of the same entity as meditative stabilization because it is moistened with calm abiding as a mental factor. This virtuous meditation preceding sleep sets up a period of sleep that is also virtuous, but it only lasts a period of time, later something non-virtuous will arise. Another sign is the dawning in your consciousness of appearances, like spontaneous visions of light inside the head. Another sign is the generation of an extraneous body-like pliancy. Since the physical body maintains its muscular exertion at the lowest feasible level, merely providing a scaffolding around calm abiding, its near absence creates a kind of vacuum where certain electrical brain signals, previously connected to the bio-organism leave their anatomical moorings and naturally click into the resonant frequency of higher functions. These are spiritual functions, inner spiritual organs of an astralmembranous kind which awaken and separate themselves from the bonds of their bodily counterpart. This shadow like pliancy can be described as an extended ether body which, strengthened and enlarged in clarity and awareness, is conductible and is able to be accumulated and discharged. Bibliography/Acknowledgements Visuddi Magga (The Path Of Purification) by the Monk Buddaghosa circa 5th Century B.C. (Based on Buddha's Discourses and early commentaries in Pali.) Vipassana Publications Tranquillity And Insight Amadeo Sole-Leris, An Introduction to the Oldest Form of Buddhist Meditation. Shambhala Boston 1986. Walking Through Walls Geshe Gedun Lodro, A Presentation of Tibetan Meditation 1992 (reprinted as Calm Abiding and Special Insight, Snow Lion 2001) Meditative States in Tibetan Buddhism Lati Rinbochay & Denmo Locho Rinpochay, Wisdom Publications Boston 1983 Tibetan Tradition Of Mental Development Geshey Ngawang Dhargyey, Library of Tibetan Works & Archives 1978 Samathavipasyanayuganaddha The Two Leading Principles of Buddhist Meditation Geshe Sopa, The Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies. Mindfulness of Breathing Anapanasati, Buddhist texts from the Pali Canon Translated by Nanamoli Thera. Buddhist Publication Society Ceylon Oral teachings: Deer Park Buddhist Center, Oregon Wisconsin 1980-90 Notes (1) The Three Realms and Nine Levels are diagramed in Meditative States In Tibetan 1986 page 13.

—777— (5) Thoughts as being intrusive to sustaining attention is not only a Buddhist concern. Listen to this incredible tract from Balzac in Les Martyres Ignores in 1843. "I wanted to tell you a secret: Thought is more powerful than the body; thought devours it, absorbs it and destroys it; thought is the most violent of all agents of destruction; it is the veritable exterminating angle of humanity that kills and animates, because it does animate and kill. My experiences have been geared to resolve this problem, and I am convinced that the span of life is in relation to the force that the individual can oppose to thought; the basis is temperament....Do you know what I mean by thought? The passions, the vices, extreme occupations, sorrows, pleasures are torrents of thought." (6) The Confessions of Aleister Crowley, Penguine Books London 1979 p 248. There is an essay on Bennett by Elizabeth J. Harris Ananda Metteyya The First British Emissary of Buddhism The Wheel Publication, Colombo. Bennetts own book The Wisdom Of The Aryas published by Kegan Paul in 1923 is very rare. Will a modern Thelemic publish it? (7) Tranquillity & Insight, page 31 (8) Approaching The Tantras Jeffrey Hopkins, Snow Lion Tapes Ithaca New York 1986. Anne Klein speeks about "the unlanguaged areas of mind" that result from going deeper into meditation. Meeting the Great Bliss Queen Beacon Press Boston, page 199. (9) The feat of matching left-hemisphere articulation with right-hemisphere feeling confronts the meditator not as an ability but as necessity. The bilateral symmetry and operational characteristics, including genderized energy as it applies to Samatha are explored in What is Fast First No. 20, 47, 76 (available on this site) (10) The term "riddances" is used here concerning the elimination of obstacles to samatha and not to be confused with the deeper "uprooting of the passions and nesciences" on the path of vision. Samathavipasyanayuganaddha Geshe Sopa, JIABS page 59. (11)There are many gradations of 'clarity' when it comes to mind and perhaps also the sky; one may become haunted by its azure, but that azure is less a pure blue realm than more rarefied upper airs, which in the case of mind goes on up into omniscience. In his recorded lectures The Jewel Tree of Tibet Boulder Co. 2001, Robert Thurman spoke of a person becoming even more solid "I am the one" with his mind standing still. "Many people who have had long years of meditating could emerge from that even more selfish than when they went in and then demand to be worshipped as guru's and behave unwholesomely. Even with higher magical powers gained by the real ability to concentrate they are far from being enlightened loving benevolent people. So mastery of meditation by itself does not dislodge selfishness -therefore does not produce enlightenment." (12) Blavatsky did not recommend, even to her inner circle members the practice of yogic meditation because she felt too many might fall into mediumship or abuse the psychic powers that would emerge. Aleister Crowley had similar reservations, noting the karmic responsibility for giving techniques to reach higher states that are then misused. The scene has changed since then, as a result of the Tibetan diaspora meditation masters have established Dharma centers throughout the West. (13) Special wording and terms used in this last section are from Walking Through Walls chapter 9 (14) These images, paraphrased from the Visuddi Magga can be found in Sole-Leris on page 59 and earlier, page 31. (15) Buddhist Meditation Edward Conze Harper & Row, New York 1969. page 113, 114.

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